

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, undated, with transcript

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his mother, Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell, from Cunard Steamer "Aurania" New York (undated) Cunard Steamer "Aurania" — New York, (date ?) My own dear Mama:

I feel quite sad at having to leave you — and only wish I could take with me the knowledge that you were well and strong. I shall think of you on the Atlantic and over in old England — or wherever I may be — and I will come back as soon as I can — to find you — I hope — thoroughly recovered.

The chief thing that troubles me is your steady refusal to have a maid or nurse attend upon you. Quite independently of illness altogether — you need a maid to wait upon you and take care of you — and it would please me and gratify me if you would allow me to provide one for you. If you should relent from your determination I should feel satisfied with any maid or nurse that Dr. Kerr would select — provided that she was to devote herself solely and exclusively to your personal comfort. You have never known the comfort of personal attention of this kind. You are not as young or active or strong as you used to be and the independent feeling that led you in the past to do everything for yourself — while quite right then — is no longer justifiable now. This independence of feeling — is the occasion of trouble and anxiety to all who love you. To me especially is it a cause of anxiety — for I long — from my independent means — to do something to promote your personal comfort and happiness — and you will not let me.

I want you to have a maid to wait upon you and take care of you — to dress you and undress you — and do the hundred and one little things that you have been accustomed to do for yourself all your life — but which you should not be required to do now. It is hard for you to give up independent activity but for my sake — and for the sake of all who love

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you — won't you do it now if only for a little while. Dr. Kerr thinks that you need more than a maid — that you require a nurse — of this he is the best judge. If however you are perfectly well — I should still insist — that you NEED a maid — exclusively and purely devoted to you — to do for you everything that now requires the exertion of activity on your part.

Love to papa and my cousins. I love you very much.

Your affectionate son, Alec